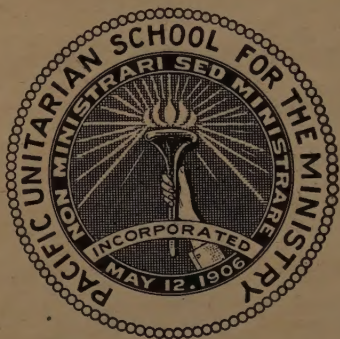


THE IMMANENCE OF GOD
AND THE
INDIVIDUALITY OF MAN

SIR HENRY JONES

BT
124
J65
1912
GTU
Storage



BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

THE GIFT OF

Unitarian Home
Missionary College

The Immanence of God and the Individuality of Man.

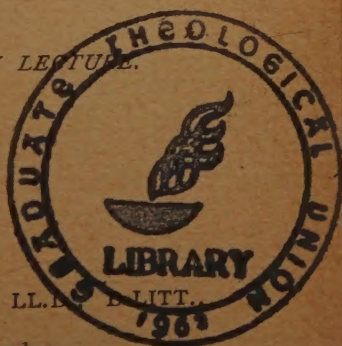
PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY LECTURE.

BY

SIR HENRY JONES, LL.D., D.LITT.

Fellow of the British Academy,

Professor of Moral Philosophy, University of Glasgow.



Property of

CBSK

Manchester:

Please return to

H. RAWSON AND CO., PRINTERS, NEW BROWN STREET.

1912.

Graduate Theological

Union Library

BT

124

165

1912

G

20

2745939810

5706.126
3717

The Immanence of God
and the
Individuality of Man.

“ **H**E loved great things and thought
little of himself: desiring
neither fame nor influence he won the
devotion of men and was a power in their
lives: and seeking no disciples he taught to
many the greatness of the world and of
man's mind.”

These words, written by Professor
Bradley, are inscribed on a tablet erected
in the Chapel of Balliol College, Oxford, to
the memory of Richard Lewis Nettleship,

who was a Tutor in that College for twenty-three years, and who died on the 25th of August, 1892, on Mont Blanc, in a storm of wind and snow.

The modest and inconspicuous life of a student and teacher of philosophy has never been recorded in words of more quiet beauty ; nor has a philosophic faith been rendered more modestly. To have " taught to many the greatness of the world and of man's mind " seems, at first sight, to constitute a very slender claim to be remembered of men. The doctrine is meagre. It is indefinite. It is not new. Even its truth may appear to be doubtful.

Nevertheless, the phrase somehow lingers in the ear, and wins upon the mind. It

suggests a plenitude and an all-encompassing munificence; and to dwell upon it is like listening to the sound of the ocean when it is asleep. It is the modern rendering, in times which I believe often serve God without naming Him, of the conviction of His universal indwelling, and of joy in His Presence which the devout know. I have no doubt it meant that for Mr. Nettleship; for he was one of those men who employ secular language to convey sacred meanings and who suggest more than they say.

His simple doctrine, moreover, comes to us freighted with his singularly impersonal character: for we are told that he "thought little of himself," "desired neither power nor influence," and "sought no disciples."

In him was the *Amor Dei* of which Spinoza speaks—a love towards God so full and so pure as not to strive to be loved in return.

And herein lies the reason why I have ventured to ask your attention to this remarkable inscription. It brings before us in the simplest way the subject with which we have to deal to-night, and presents us with the actual solution of the apparent contradiction which indubitably lies at the heart of man's highest spiritual attainment. For the truly good life does somehow present itself as man's own life and also as the life of God—God dwelling within him. The greatness and might and splendour of man's individuality are at their highest when he feels that God's all and man's naught—when the

indwelling of God in the depths and secret places of his life is most intimate, and his whole nature is diffused with His light and love.

Now, both theology and philosophy have found it very difficult to understand this fact. If we surveyed the reflective thought of the present day and penetrated beneath the technical and secular language of the schools, we should find that it is engaged most of all upon this problem: how to maintain without limiting or compromising both the immanence of God, His veritable working within our inmost mind and will, *and* the individuality and freedom and responsibility of man.

The consciousness of this difficulty and the

attempt to solve it constitute together one of those things which distinguish our age from all its predecessors. Our age affirms and it would fain prove, in its behaviour and in its thought, that the world and the mind of man are twin-splendours emanating from one source and revealing the One Real. Hitherto, except during rare and short periods, as in the youthful and trustful and joyous life of Greece, when man's life was in accord with a world conceived in terms of beauty and the very gods were secular; when the depths of the significance of moral right and wrong and of the things of the spirit had not been discovered,—except at those times, the natural world and the mind of man have been held in contrast; and each

of them in turn has lost its value in the presence of its opposite, while God was far away from both.

As a rule, it was the mind of man and man's whole life which sank into utter insignificance. He is but "a thinking reed," said Pascal, "the most fragile of all Nature's products." Our thoughts wing their way over the broad surface of the earth and into the deep immensities of the sky, we witness the dread play of Nature's powers, and divine the laws which maintain themselves unchanging while worlds are born and die. Necessity with its stern face sits and guides the scheme, while we ourselves take our unstable stand on the fleeting instant, and the endless future slips into the endless past

beneath our feet, and we return within ourselves, and feel that

“ We are such stuff as dreams are made on,
And our little life is rounded with a sleep.”

But at other times, in the rarer moments of deeper reflexion, it is the all-encompassing realm of nature that sinks into an unsubstantial pageant, as compared with man. It is true, as Pascal adds, that “ Nature can crush man. Nor need she put on her armour for the task : a breath of air, a drop of water, and he dies. But even if the Universe does crush him, man is the nobler of the two. He knows that he dies ; but the Universe knows nothing of its advantage over him.” Man’s capacity for thought lifts him to another level of being. If we take the

facts of this world as they appear we must conclude that, except in relation to him, and when she borrows his endowments, Nature is a dark, unconscious mass. It is only in the medium of his spirit that her great scheme becomes the scene of beauty and truth. She requires his mind to possess and express meaning; and she has no purpose apart from him. He sets free her capacities and only by reference to her does man realize his own powers.

"I can believe this dread machinery
Of sin and sorrow would confound me else,
Devised . . . to evolve
The moral qualities of man—how else?
To make him love in turn and be beloved,
Creative and self-sacrificing too,
And thus eventually God-like."

From this point of view it is not man, but

the outward scheme in contrast with man, which sinks in value. The obligations and necessities of a life that is spiritual are deeper, more primary than any natural law or necessity. Heaven and earth may pass away; the natural scheme appears to be but a shifting show, the mere shadow projected upon the screen of sense by the unchanging majesty of things eternal.

What man is there who, in hours of contemplation, has not been tossed to and fro in this manner between the sense of his own littleness and his own greatness; between the futility, shallowness, meaninglessness of life and the transcendent weight of its destiny?

In remote Königsberg, in Eastern

Prussia, there is another monument erected to the memory of a philosopher, of whom these things may remind you. There the first sentence of the greatest passage ever written by Immanuel Kant is inscribed, in which the two immensities of Nature and Spirit are held together as for a moment for men to contemplate.

“Two things fill my soul with ever new and ever growing awe, the more often and the longer they engage my contemplation—the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me.

“I cannot regard either of them as veiled in darkness, or as belonging to some transcendental realm beyond the range of my vision. I see them before me. I connect them

directly with the consciousness of my own being.

“The first of them begins from the place on which I stand in the world of sense. It extends my connexion therewith into an immeasurable magnitude — with worlds upon worlds, and systems upon systems, the boundless time of their periodic motion, their beginning and their duration.

“The second begins from my invisible self, from my personality. It places me in a world which has true infinitude, whose outlines only the understanding can trace, and with which my connexion is not merely accidental, as it is with the world of sense; but I am in a relation to it which is universal and necessary.

“The vision of the first nullifies my importance. I am but a brute creature, which has borrowed the material of which it is made and which must give it back again to the planet on which it lives,—the planet itself hardly more than a speck in the vast universe. But the vision of the second raises my worth beyond all limitations. It exhibits me as a being which has mind, and which is gifted with personality. In me is revealed the moral law, which shows that I am independent of all animality and of the whole world of sense; and which accepts neither conditions nor bounds but points onwards to infinitude.”

The whole system of this great thinker swings and sways between these two alter-

nate visions. He knew that both of them were true; but the labour of a long life of profound reflexion failed to reconcile them. Sense and spirit, the material world and the mind of man, natural necessity and moral freedom, the blank despair of Materialism and the empty void of Scepticism on the one hand, and, on the other, the reasoned hope of a destiny to whose spiritual splendour there are no bounds, remained for Kant opposed to one another till the evening twilight wrapped his great mind in its folds.

Reason, which was for him as it ought always to be for us all, a most sovereign and noble power, imperatively demanded the idea of God, of freedom, and of immortality. But experience neither yielded these ideas

nor ratified them. Nowhere in the broad realm of the things that he saw could he find objects that corresponded to these ideas, and met the demands of reason. Whether there are such objects no man shall ever know. If the objects are, the low mists of sense which rest motionless upon this domain of space and time shroud them for ever from the understanding of mankind. Half-hidden and half-revealed,—hidden by sense, suggested by reason, they stand on the utter limits of the horizon of mind, and we know not whether they are the emanations of our own clouded spirits, or the everlasting mountains of the world of truth.

Now, I would ask you, if I may, to observe that these were the ripest fruit of the noblest

thought of those times, and of its most spiritual philosophy. It was a "Grand Perhaps," and nothing more. Man's mind, "fallen with its weight of cares," could only stretch

"Lame hands of faith, and grope
And gather dust and chaff
And faintly trust the larger hope."

But the world of mind moves no less than the world of sense, and it is carried, bearing with it its revolving seasons, into new regions of the sky. And now—nay, from the very days of Kant himself until the present—the main charge and the supreme endeavour of master minds is to overcome this contradiction, to turn the "Perhaps" into assured faith, nay, if possible, into that demonstrated knowledge which is sustained

by testimony wrung from the nature of the facts of the present life.

Poets, philosophers, devout thinkers, and, in these latter days, men of science also, have sought to reflect the glory of the world into the mind of man, and the glory of Mind into Nature. It has been discovered, and is being slowly realised, that our predecessors separated when they should only have distinguished, and sought the monotonous identity of sameness when they might possess the richer identity of harmonious system. They turned differences into antagonism, and sought to abolish when they might have reconciled. They divorced elements which are complementary and which reach hands and yearn towards one another.

Owing to a false logic and a false view of personality, they set Nature against Spirit and Spirit against Nature, ordaining a divorce which leads to death. For what is it that is crass and material, remorseless and blind? Not the natural scheme, but the empty eye-socket which remains when mind is left out of it,—that fragment of the natural scheme which is left over after man and his spiritual potencies have been treated as foreign and alien and opposed. Man, her child, treated as alien! Has he not waxed within her womb, and suckled her breasts, and been nursed on her knees? It is he who babbles her speech, tries to read her face, guess her meaning, divine her purposes, and whose very soul, apart from her, would be empty nothingness.

We have been full of zeal for our individuality, and of care for our personality, and afraid to venture out on the great deep. We have sought freedom in isolation, and found instead emptiness and weakness. We have regarded Nature and her powers as intruders, shut the self within itself, and put up the shutters of the Soul. What else could follow than that Nature should be void of meaning, and man's soul void of content and all power?

But now, we would bring them together again, and see whether the self that is saturated with Nature is not more free and more potent than the self which was called impervious; and whether the Nature which is saturated with Spirit is not more real than

the Nature which was crass and material. The world of sense is now being revaluated : the whole scheme, including man, is being interpreted anew. It is maintained with a confidence which is growing that sense and the things of sense, and the whole scheme of finitude do not obscure but reveal the eternal verities. The temporal is not secular any more, nor is there anything in this wide world which is common and unclean, unless, alas ! man has made it so.

Time was when " Life, the dome of many coloured glass," was held to

" Stain the white radiance of eternity,
Until death tramples it to fragments."

" Die,"

we were told,

" If thou would'st be with that which thou dost seek !
Follow where all is fled."

The true, the good, were not here but elsewhere. But, after Shelley comes Robert Browning, and *now*

“The world’s no blot for us,

Nor blank : it means intensely and means good.”

“The One remains; the many change and pass,” says Shelley; and it is true. Nevertheless the One is not empty sameness and solitude, and the transiency of the many is not its full history. Life, the dome of many coloured glass, does not *stain* the white radiance of eternity. The storied windows of this our earthly existence, though they sunder its rays and break its beams, set free the colours; they let fall many a shadow and dim the brightness, but they soften its brightness into unspeakable beauty. Clouds

obscure, but they are held within the infinite azure of the sky. They are sun-suffused, and add glory to the heavens. The whole realm of Nature and of man's soul is steeped in meaning, and God has

“ Wreaked on finiteness infinitude.”

Such is the doctrine of immanence which is being gradually made good, not merely by the inspired imagination of the poets, but by the science and philosophy which examine the actual facts which lie around us, and which are learning to reject as false those abstractions which, in the narrow care for the independence of isolation that is mere emptiness and powerlessness, baffled our predecessors. Is it not more than evident that the truth, the beauty, which man seeks

dwell within the scheme of things in which he lives and moves and has his being? Are the harmonies not always there for the fine ear, which in apprehending them gives them being? The lore for which the sciences and philosophy toil, is it not written, every syllable of it, in Nature's structure? Of Nature divorced from Man, of Man divorced from Nature, we cannot think too meanly. But link Man and Nature together, restore the unity which only our false thinking has broken, and you will find every obdurate fact freighted full of meaning, "as the star with light." Nature is the other aspect of Spirit, its complement, the partner of man in the enterprise of knowledge, and of every virtue. Without her the slumber of

his soul could never be broken, nor his ignorance be illumined by one ray. But Nature is not niggard. Her springs flow perennially, and man's thirst is capable of being very deep : only it is our cups which are small.

“ In Nature and the language of the sense,”

man can find

“ The author of [his] purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of his heart, and soul
Of all his moral being.”

Now, this new view of Nature's munificence to man, and his intrinsic kinship with Nature, has brought with it a new conception of the law of man's own behaviour. So long as the material world was deemed to be the mere crass and obstinate opposite of spirit, instead of being the medium in

which spirit both attains and reveals its highest ways of being, man's own Nature was held to be corrupt. The earth-born elements in him were a hindrance and obstruction; the vesture of his soul was an unclean thing to be put off; his natural appetites and desires were discordant cries for things that cannot satisfy but corrupt and destroy. He was divided against himself in a warfare to which there can be no end so long as he moves within the world of sense and is clothed with the muddy vesture of decay.

But now we discern that the present life of man, with all its natural conditions, is in every element of it a beneficent gift, and that man himself was made not in anger, but in

Love. And his duty in consequence wears another aspect. It is not to renounce but to dedicate; not to immolate but to consecrate; not to destroy but to transfigure. For there is nothing in him which love for his kind and for his God may not make sublime, transmuting it into the means, the vehicle, the instrument, the opportunity of the larger and better life. Let the pure air of the world of light and love but touch the strings of his most human nature, and they will yield a harmony sweeter than that of the singing stars.

And now, what remains? It is to carry the same hypothesis further, if that be possible. Rejecting the old abstractions and antagonisms, we must endeavour to re-

interpret and reevaluate, not merely sense and the things of sense, Nature and the natural elements in man, but the dark and confused domain of his will.

I am not ignorant of the difficulties of this task. It is easier to find God everywhere than in this region. I do not need the help of the Pluralist in order to see the apparent chaos of human history, nor that of the Pessimist to make me acquainted with grief. I am speaking, and I know I am speaking, of the brief, blundering, sorrow-laden life of a being whose soul is the arena of warring passions, and the victim of foolish illusions and most vain desires. It is a petty State, all in revolt, ignorant of its own good, weak of purpose, set to maintain itself amidst powers

which neither listen to his cries nor consult his weakness, and whose beneficence is often veiled.

Who has not been tempted to regard the whole history of man as a tragic narrative ?

“ Only a scene

Of degradation, and ugliness and tears,

The record of disgraces best forgotten,

A sullen page in human chronicles,

Fit to erase.”

Or if at times, by setting our landmarks far apart and looking back to ages long ago, we discern signs of general progress, are we not like those who in crossing a mountain range can see in the distance the faint traces of a path, but no vestige of it around their feet ? We look within ourselves, and examine the

petty incidents of our little lives, and we find so little to make us glad.

“ Such timid leaf,
Uncertain bud, as product of our pains.”

We look around upon the larger life of the social world and the political state—that mind-made structure, into which the knowledge, the energy, the instructed will of unnumbered generations of men have built themselves, the greatest by far of all the achievements of the human spirit: what do we see? It is weltering chaos thinly crusted over, and hardly held down; its elements ever embattling themselves for war. It is Civilization itself, the hard-won product of man's greatest pains, whose security seems to many to be at stake, striking its moving

tent and facing a wilderness which no foot has ever trodden, and no man knowing what awaits it.

Will it emerge at last? Or are its forces once more to be rolled backwards?

The answer, I believe, depends upon whether we can reevaluate this domain of the human mind and will, even as we have reevaluated the realm of Nature. And I, for one, cannot admit that Order, Purpose, Reason, Law—God, is everywhere except in the mind of man. I distrust entirely that philosophy and that theology which, in order to maintain the responsibilities of the moral life and the possibilities of spirit, have deemed it necessary to shut God outside the human soul.

Man's soul is mediated by the vast scheme in which he lives. His environment is the treasury from which he draws every item of his knowledge, and his world is the laboratory wherein he achieves his character. Sever him from his world, isolate him, call his self "impervious," let the world's waves beat about his soul as around a rock-bound island, and his mind will be dark, his will uninformed, and wholly impotent for either good or evil.

Examine as I will any action that I attribute to myself, I find that the environment in which I live, participates in my action. My actions are my own, I refer them to myself, they are the expressions of my individuality; but they are not my own in a sense

that excludes. My volitions are my volitions, they issue from the secret places of my will; but if I examine my will, from which they emanate, I find it saturated with that portion of the world which has been the object of my experience. The country in which I was born, the father and mother which were given to me, the hearth, the school, the college, the religious community, the secular sphere, the stream of changing circumstances, the response that I have made to them from time to time, are they not at this moment living propensities, agencies active in my personality? Without these, without any others, what would my personality be, but a name or nothingness?

We have been misinterpreting the indivi-

duality of man. Man's self is the focus in which the rays of the outer reality within which it finds itself are gathered together, transmuted into living experience. My selfhood, individuality, independence, freedom depends, not on what I exclude, but on what I am able to include. For life—even natural life, and much more the life that is mental and spiritual—is a process of reaching over and laying hands upon the world; it seizes the environment—and the antecedent, too,—converts what seemed to be purely external and natural, into its own innermost living substance, lifting even it to a higher level of being, and achieving its own self in doing so.

I am not at all afraid of intimacy with my

world, or the deepest kinship. On the contrary, I want its meaning to pulse within my mind, and its purposes to beat within my will. It is there for me to appropriate, and apart from it I am more empty than a shadow.

We speak, when using the language of religion, of One "in whom we live and move and have our being." *We* would do "the works of God." "The Gift of Grace" is "the effectual working of His power." "The God of Peace make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight." This language and the convictions which it expresses are, I believe, of the essence of the religious consciousness. I cannot admit that

it is the exaggeration of enthusiasm or of metaphor, not meant to signify the truth. On the contrary, deprive the religious spirit of the sense of this unity with God, a unity that is deep, real, intimate, penetrating into all the recesses of the mind and will, enveloping the finite and infinite in one flame of love and the soul is not saved, but lost; for separation from God is death.

I cannot regard this indubitable testimony of the religious consciousness as false. What I am constrained to question and to deny is not the reality and the responsibilities of the individuality of man; but the view that bases these on separateness and isolation. The opposition of *meum* and *tuum* does not hold in this region; nor indeed in

any other part of the wide domain of life and of mind. We are not constrained to say : “ If Nature’s, then not man’s ; if man’s, then not Nature’s.” It is not the severed elements but the whole in which they cling to and hold by each other which is the real. And far less are we doomed to say “ If God’s then not ours ; if ours, then not God’s.” Is He not the essence of our essence and life of our life ?

The spiritual enterprise is an enterprise in which man risks his personality. In turning to God the soul does not merely lay this passion, or that desire, upon the altar as a burnt-offering ; but the whole self in all its compass, holding nothing back. “ I am crucified in Christ ; nevertheless I live ; yet

not I, but Christ liveth in me.” The good life is one continuous dedication to great causes. “It is not the bare personality, or the separate destiny that occupies a healthy mind,” we are told. “It is the thing to be done, known and felt.” “Man is a representative, a trustee for the world, of certain powers and circumstances. The question for him is how much he can make of them.” It is the trust that matters, and not the trustee. This is what the Scriptures, using their powerful metaphor, call “dying to self.” It is not too strong, it represents a condition, a stage and moment of the moral and intellectual life. The best souls, at their best, give away the last remnant of their selfhood — “in loving God, they do not even desire that God should love them in return.”

But although this is a condition of the good life, and a moment in its history, it is not its whole history. For it is precisely when the cause counts and the good man cares not whether he himself counts at all, that he counts most. This dying is life; and it is the life that is eternal, one with that of the good that is working in the world, which is the Will of God. These *are* the spiritual heights, this is achievement. Standing here man is "more than Conqueror"; and he can turn round and challenge all the powers.

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors

through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Having this faith that the indwelling of God sustains, enriches, liberates, enlarges the personality of man; venturing very near to the flame that does not consume but enfolds,

" Equalizing, ever and anon,
In momentary rapture, great with small,
Omniscience with intelligency, God
With Man—the thunder-glow from pole to pole
Abolishing; a blissful moment-space
Great cloud and small, in one fire—
As sure to ebb as sure again to flow
When her new receptivity describes
The New Completion."

—having this faith, we may take courage from man's very unhappiness, and hope from his fears and discontent. And our courage and hope are sustained by what we see. For, looking out upon the world, with all the wild welter of the scene, I can discern no tragedy anywhere save that which results from man's forgetfulness of his own intrinsic splendour. Looking within myself, I can recall no cup whose bitterness was not mitigated, except that which my own wrongdoing mixed and raised to my lips. And I have never known anyone do what is good, without thereby becoming good, in his degree. In the region of material things we may see one sow and another reap; one plant the vineyard and another eat of its fruit. But it is not so in the

realm of the things that ultimately matter. There the fulfilment of the duty and the disregard of the self which it seems to entail, is the realization of the self that does the duty. Man gets in giving. Love enriches the lover. He gains his soul who pours it forth. Even in this world of mingled joy and bitterness, right and wrong, this law is never broken.

Man's very discontent and unrest are in the last resort, I believe, nothing but the yearning of his nature for the fulfilment of the law of Love, which unites and does not sever, making man's cause one with God's, and uniting man's destiny with His will. This is "the immortal thirst for good."

I believe, therefore, that we may take heart, even though our path is dark and the times

are new, and the forces let loose within the social life baffle our control. Only let us not hate, but strive to understand. The sciences of man, and of human society, are only in their infancy. And who will say but that if stung into new enquiry by the new necessities and trusting the patient ways of the sciences of Nature, we may not discover anew the need of a larger morality and the possibilities of new spiritual enterprises on a scale not known before.

Pressing God's lamp close to our breast, carrying within our inmost selves the sense of His indwelling and presence, though we step into a dark, tremendous cloud, it is but for a time.

"Its splendour soon or late will pierce the gloom.
We shall emerge the day."

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LIBRARY
1000 UNIVERSITY AVENUE
BERKELEY, CALIF. 94720
(415) 848-5200

Items are subject to recall

GTU Library
2400 Ridge Road
Berkeley, CA 94709
For renewals call (510) 649-2500

All items are subject to recall.

DATE DUE

GAYLORD	PRINTED IN U.S.A.

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

